

Matthew T. Turi. Working on the South: A Statistical Description of Scholarly Use and Non-Use of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Manuscripts Department's Collections. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S degree. April, 2004. 51 pages. Advisor: Deborah Barreau.

To understand the factors that underlie the scholarly use or non-use of the collections of the Manuscripts Department of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a study of 155 scholars was conducted to assess the research practices of the University's academic scholars of the American South as they relate to the department's main collections. The results present a descriptive analysis of scholars affiliated with the University with regard to the degree and patterns of manuscript use or non-use in the various academic disciplines, reasons for non-use of manuscript materials, and the information material preferences of these scholars. Findings suggest that archivists can benefit from assessing the information needs of their larger constituency rather than their users alone.

Headings:

Archives—United States—Use studies.

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Library. Southern Historical Collection.

WORKING ON THE SOUTH:
A STATISTICAL DESCRIPTION OF SCHOLARLY USE AND NON-USE OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL'S
MANUSCRIPTS DEPARTMENT'S COLLECTIONS

by
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“Who am I? Why am I here?”—Admiral James Stockdale, vice presidential candidate

I. Introduction

At a recent and poorly attended function at the Manuscripts Department, more than a few staff members, like the admiral, were left to wonder about the elusive nature of one's public identity. In this instance, a disappointing turnout reinforced a vague sense of unease among some of the staff members that the collections of the Manuscripts Department were being underutilized by the University of North Carolina's scholarly community.¹ This is an especially vexing observation for the staffs of manuscript repositories who are intimately involved in an intellectual task that is more akin to publishing than librarianship. And for archivists, as for publishers, the dead weight of a poorly selected collection has multiple sets of costs; costs that can eat up processing budgets, devour linear feet of shelf space, and eventually limit the staffs' collection development choices.

To understand the factors that underlie the scholarly use or non-use of this repository and its component collections this study seeks to delineate the mental maps that scholars of the American South have constructed of their academic fields, their specific research interests, and their research material-type preferences; and it seeks to determine whether the Southern Historical Collection, the Southern Folklife Collection, General and Literary Manuscripts, and University Archives have a place within these conceptualized universes. In brief, how do a scholar's academic discipline, career status,

¹ The website of the Manuscripts Department of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is available at URL: <http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/>.

specific research interests, research material predilections and practices, and assumptions about the collections housed in the Manuscripts Department relate to the use or non-use of these materials?

More specifically, the results of this study will present the collection development staff of the Manuscripts Department with a descriptive analysis of scholars affiliated with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill who are actively engaged in scholarship about the American South with regard to the degree and patterns of manuscript use or non-use in the various academic disciplines; reasons for non-use of manuscript materials; and the information material preferences of these scholars. Additionally, it is hoped that the results and process of surveying both users and non-users will encourage archivists of the value and manageability of assessing the information needs of their larger constituency rather than relying on the statistics provided by those relatively few scholars who use their collections.

II. Literature Review

If the literature of a profession is to some degree a reflection of its interests and preoccupations, it is fairly safe to assert that creating a regular and ongoing means of assessing the opinions and research needs of potential academic user communities has not been a central concern of the professionals charged with the task of building manuscript collections.² The impression of an almost studied insularity is reinforced in the recent works of a few authors from the archival press. First, in an article concerning the various types of archival users, Ian Mortimer, an active British historian and archivist, made some pointed remarks about the almost pathological aversion that practicing archivists have to seeking out the opinions and views of the “academic community,” whose patronage they most value.³ Secondly, Cynthia Sauer’s recent large survey of manuscript collection development policies tacitly assumes that collection development policies are developed internally and never asks curators about any external contacts that were made as they developed their collecting plans. Indeed, one of her most troubling findings is that the majority of manuscript collection development policies were written to make sense of past collecting decisions. This overly self-referential perspective and its concomitant reliance on curatorial intuition as the primary guide to collection building

² This is a bit unfair because few information professionals have purposefully tried to measure their institution’s non-users. A more common theme seems to be to try and measure the use and non-use of a specific service or format that a library is offering its users. A well grounded example of this genre is: I. Lawal. “Scholarly Communication: The Use and Non-Use of E-Print Archives for the Dissemination of Scientific Information,” *Issues in Science and Technology Librarianship* 36 (Fall 2002).

³ Mortimer, I. “Discriminating between Readers: the case for a policy of flexibility,” *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 23, no. 1 (April 2002): 59.

appears to have left little room for the consideration of the actual needs of communities of academic researchers.⁴

If manuscript archivists are largely uninterested in debating the disconnection that exists between the methods and institutional requirements of collection building and the information needs of professional researchers, the same is not true of the community of information professionals constructing digital libraries, where an instructive debate on this very subject is occurring. Christine Borgman's analysis of the various definitions that have laid claim to the term "digital library" reveals a broad and suggestive definitional divide that is strongly linked to the professional identities of members of the "communities of digital library research and practice." Researchers, who are primarily information scientists, have a strong tendency to describe "digital libraries" in sequence model-like terms, focusing on the practices and technologies that are directly involved in the collection of information content for distribution to a designated community of users. The practitioners, who are librarians, archivists, and other professional information intermediaries, have formed a less linear definition and tend to view "digital libraries" as the sum of their many institutional parts.⁵

The observation that librarians and archivists employ a very crowded conceptualization of "digital libraries" is reflected in the works of Abby Smith and other authors writing under the aegis of the Digital Library Federation. In Smith's view, the creation of digital collections must be made a normal and routine part of the library's traditional collection development strategy with all its attendant rights, concerns, and

⁴ Sauer, C.K. "Doing the Best We Can? The Use of Collection Development Policies and Cooperative Collecting Activities at Manuscripts Repositories," *American Archivist* 64, (Fall/Winter 2001): 335.

⁵ Borgman, Christine L. "What are Digital Libraries? Competing Visions," *Information Processing and Management* 35, (1999): 228-229. Idem. *From Gutenberg to the Global Information Infrastructure* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2000): 33-52.

responsibilities. This prescription for digital domestication is a very comfortable one, but it can also be read as an unintended cautionary tale in which the creation of digital collections is all too commonly freighted with institutional concerns, needs, and practices that have very little to do with delivering a usable, desired, and valued information product to a well defined community of users.⁶

Following Borgman's typology, if the essential considerations for the creation of digital collections were institutional ones, researchers, and especially David Levy, would argue that the most essential first step is a deeper and more thoughtful consideration of reasons and assumptions underlying the creation of a collection for a community of users. In a series of works, Levy argues that historically libraries have continually misconceived their role with respect to their users' needs, and thus their missions; furthermore, without a great deal of critical thinking and active exploration of the work that users do, he expects that this malady is likely to continue to plague libraries whatever their future forms. Levy's solution calls for a fuller acknowledgement of the nature of documents and digital technologies, as well as the utilization of what he has labeled as a "work-oriented approach." He envisions the development of a holistic understanding of the dynamic relationships that exist among a library's holdings and collections, the digital technologies that support these collections and their users as well as the various types of "work that is being done with them." This fuller understanding of its actual relationship to users and their tasks will help inform library collection development policies and

⁶ Smith, A. *Strategies for Building Digitized Collections*, (Washington, D.C.: Council on Library and Information Resources, 2001).

ultimately allow the library and its staff to more precisely tailor policies, actions, and collections to better support the actual research needs of its users.⁷

The level of user understanding that Levy calls for is extraordinarily full and deep.⁸ While his approach generates a fascinating wealth of ethnographic details, it is a bit perplexing to see how invasive micro-studies of work patterns and information-using behaviors could be practically translated into the everyday routines and practices of libraries and archives as their staffs attempt to assess user behaviors and needs with respect to their collections both current and prospective. Nevertheless, Levy's great contribution is the persuasive and dramatic manner in which he calls for a radical shift in perspective away from the preoccupations, experiences, values, and technical concerns of collecting librarians and archivists toward those of the user.

The trick, of course, is to convert Levy's impassioned plea that libraries and archives need to base collecting decisions on knowledge about the actual information needs and practices of their prospective users into a workable process that collection development librarians and archivists would be likely to adopt.⁹ That this is a reasonable task seems certain. After all, in the decade and a half that has passed since Paul Conway urged archives to implement a systematic surveying process of in-house users, the

⁷ Levy, D.M. "Going Digital: A Look at Assumptions Underlying Digital Libraries," *Communications of the ACM* 38, no. 4 (April 1995): 78. Idem. "Digital Libraries and the Problem of Purpose," *D-Lib Magazine* 6, no. 1 (January 2000).

⁸ For two detailed examples of the kinds of ethnographic studies that David Levy is calling for see: Brockman, W.S., L. Neumann, C.L. Palmer, T.J. Tidline. *Scholarly Work in the Humanities and the Evolving Information Environment*, (Washington, D.C.: Digital Library Federation/Council on Library and Information Resources, 2001) and P. Botticelli. "Records Appraisal in Network Organizations," *Archivaria* 49 (Spring 2000): 161-191.

⁹ The survey form that this study uses is clearly not the only paper-based methodology available. One recent work described the pitfalls and difficulties, both in terms of respondent compliance and text coding for analysis, of using diaries to record the details of manuscript research practices. Toms, E.G. and W. Duff. "I Spent 1 ½ Hours Sifting Through One Large Box . . . : Diaries as Information Behavior of the Archives User: Lessons Learned," *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 53, no. 14 (2002): 1232-1238.

archival reference user survey has become ubiquitous.¹⁰ The next logical step is to design a process that reaches out into the broader target community to more fully assess their information needs.¹¹

¹⁰ Conway, P. "Facts and Frameworks: An Approach to Studying the Users of Archives," *American Archivist* 49 (Fall 1986): 394-395.

¹¹ Frederic Miller's citation analysis of scholarly articles on American social history is a rare and welcome example of the archival literature concerning the actual use of manuscript materials; however, his narrow emphasis on social historians, who are undoubtedly an important component of archival users, is more narrowly focused than the multidiscipline study this work proposes. Miller, F. "Use, Appraisal, and Research: A Case Study of Social History," *American Archivist* 49 (Fall 1986): 371-392.

III. Methodology

The Survey Population

This study was conducted using a paper-based survey designed to solicit the information to construct a descriptive analysis of the research practices of the key component of the Manuscripts Department's target audience: academic scholars of the American South.¹² For the purposes of this study, "academic scholars of the American South" was broadly defined to include faculty, research staff, and graduate students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, who were actively engaged in conducting original research on topics involving the southeastern United States during the 2004 spring semester.

Given the fairly transient nature of any university community, identifying and locating an artificially defined cohort of scholars is a daunting task. This is especially true for graduate students, who comprise a sort of gray academia. Fortunately, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill supports The Center for the Study of the American South, which defines "deepen[ing] scholarly understanding of the South" as a central component of its mission.¹³ It was initially hoped that the Center would serve as a mediating resource for contacting scholars on campus through its listserv or other electronic bulletin boards. Ultimately, this did not prove to be an option as repeated requests to post an electronic message inviting scholars to participate in this study went unanswered.

¹²For a full discussion of the complicated and discriminatory relationships that exist between archivists, academic scholars, and amateur researchers see the previously mentioned article by Ian Mortimer and Jenny Moran and Martin Taylor, "Lowering the Drawbridge: further thoughts on discriminating between readers," *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 24, no. 1 (April 2003): 55-64.

¹³ Mission statement of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Center for the Study of the American South, URL: <http://www.unc.edu/depts/csas/mission/index.html>.

An alternate strategy of reviewing departmental websites to cull the names of relevant scholars was developed when reviews of the Center for the Study of the American South's website, particularly the roster of "Southern Studies Faculty" which listed faculty members' home departments and the *2002-2004 Carolina Graduate Record* suggested that elements of the desired study population were spread throughout the University in a heterogeneous mix of academic disciplines.¹⁴ In early February 2004, the departmental websites of African-American studies, American Studies, Anthropology, Archaeology, Creative Writing, English, Folklore, Geography, History, Journalism, Music, Political Science, Religious Studies and Sociology were scrutinized to determine all likely recipients of this study.

The threshold for determining whether or not to include a scholar in the recipient pool was low: any specific mention of a research interest related to the South on a University website ensured a scholar's selection. Although the quality and quantity of information available through the department websites varied considerably, in general, it was possible to determine the research interests of faculty members. This was not the case for graduate students, who were often listed without mention of their specific fields of study or areas of academic interest. Rather than excluding this relevant population or indiscriminately blanketing the campus with surveys, it was decided to treat the research interests of a student's academic advisor as a surrogate for his or her interests. In short, if a student's advisor was included in the recipient pool, then so was the student. It should be noted that this selection process appeared to work well across the Humanities, but less well in the Social Science disciplines of Economics and Sociology. This was true

¹⁴ Department websites were accessed through the University of North Carolina's main web page, URL: <http://www.unc.edu/depts/>. Similarly, the *2002-2004 Carolina Graduate Record* was accessed through the University's main web page, URL: <http://www.unc.edu/gradrecord>.

primarily because these particular social scientists have a marked tendency to describe their academic work and interests in broad theoretical terms, such as macroeconomic theory, symbolic interactions, and gender/class/race, rather than in specific topical, temporal, or geographic terms. It proved impossible to deconstruct these conceptual descriptions and these groups of scholars were excluded from this study's list of survey recipients.

In aggregate, this search process revealed a total of 155 scholars from 11 different departments, whose stated or inferred academic interests included topics related to the American South. Scholars from three departments, History, English, and Anthropology made up 74.8% of the potential recipient pool. Unsurprisingly, historians comprised the largest component of this subgroup, making up 38.7% of the total pool. Interestingly, the number of faculty members and graduate students was roughly equal, respectively representing 48.4% and 51.6% of the total recipient population. See Table 1, below, for a complete breakdown of the survey recipients by their department affiliation and university status.

Table 1: **Survey Recipients by Department Affiliation and Academic Status**

Department	F	% of F	G	% of G	No. of Dept. Recipients	% of Total Recipients
African-American Studies	5	6.7%	0	--	5	3.2%
American Studies ¹⁵	3	4.0%	0	--	3	1.9%
Anthropology/Archaeology	10	13.3%	14	17.5%	24	15.5%
English/Creative Writing	22	29.3%	10	12.5%	32	20.6%
Folklore ¹⁶	0	--	6	7.5%	6	3.9%
Geography	3	4.0%	3	3.8%	6	3.9%
History	20	26.7%	40	50.0%	60	38.7%
Journalism	3	4.0%	0	--	3	1.9%
Music	4	5.3%	2	2.5%	6	3.9%
Political Science	2	2.7%	0	--	2	1.3%
Religious Studies	3	4.0%	5	6.2%	8	5.2%
Totals	75	100%	80	100%	155	100%

F=Faculty Member or Research Staff

G=Graduate Student

The Survey Questions

The survey's questions were designed to acquire information that can be divided into two broad categories: biographical facts and research practices. Each respondent was asked to describe the current state of his or her academic career in terms of his or her status at the university, departmental affiliation, and his or her current level of educational achievement. The remainder of the survey asked the respondent to answer a series of questions about his or her research practices and special collection usage in relation to his or her "current or most recent research project(s)."¹⁷ Additionally, the scholars were asked to contextualize their most recent research practices within the

¹⁵ American Studies is a "Curriculum" that offers an undergraduate major. It does not offer any graduate programs and its faculty is chiefly drawn from various departments including History, English, Political Science, and Religious Studies.

¹⁶ Administratively, Folklore is a graduate degree granting "Curriculum" without a set standing faculty. Instead, it draws its faculty from various departments including History, Anthropology, Music, and English.

¹⁷ Survey question number 4. See Appendix B.

broader practices of their academic peers as well as their own personal past patterns of research. (See appendix B for the Sample Survey.)

There is an undeniable tension between our ethnographic-like aspirations to understand the perspectives and concerns that scholars have as they approach and select information materials and the limitations implicit in any written survey. The very process of survey design excludes much and to a very real extent influences or even controls the range of a respondent's replies. Questions employed in this survey were largely closed questions offering the surveyed scholars but a few occasions to freely express their thoughts, observation, or opinions. The reasons behind this tactical choice were threefold. First, limiting responses to a tightly circumscribed universe of choices was designed to lessen the errors of misinterpretation and bias that tend to occur when coding for latent content by essentially pre-coding the possible responses in the question design phase of the project and shifting the decision making onus to the respondents. Second, given the rather comprehensive nature of the desired responses, the desire to collect data from as many different elements of the survey population, and the lengthy nature of the survey, it was felt that the more intellectually passive quality of a survey conducted by closed questions would be more likely to generate useful responses as well as an overall higher response rate. And third, since one of the goals of this study is the desire to demonstrate the relative ease of gathering and analyzing a large amount of data from potential users, it was decided to make the survey instrument as user-friendly, from the surveying archivist's perspective, as possible and this suggested a series of closed questions. Despite these virtues, it is, of course, recognized that a rigorously controlled set of questions limits the opportunities for serendipitous discovery and eliminates many

of the nuances that respondents may feel is meaningful. This was obviously the case when a respondent's marginalia noted that a forced response was "at best a gross generalization."¹⁸

The Survey Dissemination and Collection

On 23rd and 24th of February 2004, 155 survey packets, containing a cover letter, the survey, and a return self-addressed envelope to an on campus mail box, were hand-delivered to the departmental addresses of all the identified scholars.¹⁹ It was requested that the survey form be completed and returned via campus mail by 10 March 2004.

Survey Analysis

The research question around which the survey questions are organized, essentially asks how a number of variables describing a scholar and his or her work relate to his or her use or non-use of manuscript materials. The hypothesis underlying this question is that scholars are pragmatic consumers of information and a decision to use or not use an information resource is a rational calculation based on an assessment of the collection's relevance to his or her work. In short, it is assumed that the use or non-use of manuscript materials is a dependent variable explained to some degree by independent variables such as a scholar's research interests or academic discipline.

¹⁸ Quotation is by R19, a Folklife Program.

¹⁹ See Appendix A and B for the survey cover letter and the survey form.

IV. Findings

The Respondents

Twenty-nine completed surveys were returned. This represents an overall response rate of 18.7%, although there are indications that the real, if incalculable, rate is somewhat higher. This response rate was calculated using the assumption that 155 of the delivered surveys reached their intended recipients. There are indications that this was not the case. Several days after the delivery of the survey packets to various campus departments, messages were received from the secretaries of the English and Religious Studies departments indicating that a number of packets intended for graduate students were undeliverable because the intended recipients were no longer affiliated with the University. In both instances, the secretaries and the departmental Graduate Program Directors were willing and able to identify suitable replacement recipients; however the implied delivery failure rate for graduate students, which ranged from 40% for English and 60% for Religious Studies, disconcertingly suggests that many more packets may have gone awry and remain undelivered or discarded.

With the exceptions of Religious Studies and American Studies, which returned no surveys, there are respondents from all the target departments; and while the respondent pool is not a precise reflection of the recipient pool, its departmental contours are roughly similar.²⁰ As in the recipient pool English, History, and Anthropology combine to provide the bulk of the respondents accounting for 68.9%. However, in this case, the relative weights of English and History are switched with the English

²⁰ This is not precisely true with regard to American Studies. Although no respondent indicated that American Studies was his or her primary departmental affiliation, a number did select it as a secondary affiliation. For various reasons no analysis of the affect of secondary affiliation on use or non-use was carried out in this study.

department accounting for 31% of respondents to the History Department's 24.1%. The reasons for this disparity result from the unexpectedly low response rate of the History Department's graduate students. Although they comprised 50% of the total graduate student recipients, they supplied only 15.4% of the graduate student responses, a gap of - 34.5%. The other unexpected, but explainable finding is the 10.3% response rate for Folklore, which is 6.4% higher than expected. As a matter of routine, most of Folklore's graduate students have the opportunity to work for the Southern Folklife Collection (SFC) processing manuscript and media materials.²¹ This easily suggests that these respondents have a degree of familiarity and interest in at least some of the Manuscript Department's holdings that would not be the norm for the overall recipient pool. This suggestion is reinforced by the statistical observation that while 100% of the Folklife respondents, who were all graduate students, were familiar with the SFC, only 35.7% of the overall respondents were familiar with this collection.

The respondent population contains a higher percentage of faculty members and research staff (55.1%) and a concomitant lower number of graduate students (44.9%) than was anticipated. Again, this resulted from the combined effects of the dramatically suppressed response rate of the History Department's graduate students and the overall problem of accurately determining relevant and currently enrolled graduate student recipients. See Table 2, below, for a complete breakdown of the survey respondents by their department affiliation and university status.

²¹ R19, Folklife Program, makes this very point, writing, "Southern Folklife Collection—Very familiar with their holdings, worked there for 2 semesters and 1 summer."

Table 2: Survey Respondents by Department Affiliation and Academic Status

Department	F	% of F	G	% of G	Total Number of Respondents	% of Total Respondents
African-American Studies	1	6.3	0	--	1	3.4
Anthropology/Archaeology	1	6.3	3	23.1	4	13.8
English/Creative Writing	5	31.2	4	30.8	9	31.0
Folklore	0	--	3	23.1	3	10.3
Geography	1	6.3	1	7.7	2	6.9
History	5	31.2	2	15.4	7	24.1
Journalism	1	6.3	0	--	1	3.4
Music	1	6.3	0	--	1	3.4
Political Science	1	6.3	0	--	1	3.4
Religious Studies	--	--	--	--	0	0
Totals	16	100.0	13	100.0	29	100.0%

F=Faculty Member or Research Staff G=Graduate Student

D=Difference between Percentages of Total Department Respondents and Total Department Recipients

Use of the Manuscript Department's Collections

Before delving into the specific patterns of use and non-use that the survey data reveal, it is important to entertain a brief discussion of how “use” is defined within the confines of this study. During the conceptualization of this research project, it was decided to try and capture a current statistical snapshot of the academic use or non-use of the Manuscripts Department's collections. Use is minimally defined as whether or not an academic researcher consulted these manuscript materials and the survey captured this basic minimal level of use by asking respondents: “Have you used primary source materials from the following research collections in your most recent research project?”²² Since the desire was also to capture a recent moment in time, the respondents were asked whether or not their most recent project that is the one they are describing in the survey had been completed over two years ago. In aggregate the answers to this query were

²² Survey question number 8. See Appendix B.

reassuring in that 89.7% of all the projects describe in the study were quite recent; they were either ongoing or had been completed no earlier than two years ago.

The Demographics of Use and Non-Use

Analysis of the survey responses show that 55.2% of the respondents indicated that they had used Manuscript Department materials in their most recent research project, whereas 44.8% had not. Further, a separate examination of respondent use of the various component collections that comprise the Manuscripts Department's holdings, in descending order of use, shows that, 41.4% of the responding scholars had used the Southern Historical Collection, 17.2% had used the Southern Folklife Collection, 17.2% had used General and Literary Manuscripts, and 6.9% had used the University Archives. It is also to be noted that 75% of the users in this sample have restricted their use to a single component collection. Of the respondent subset that used multiple collections, two scholars, or 12.5%, used a combination of materials from the Southern Historical Collection and General and Literary Manuscripts, and the remaining two scholars used materials from all four of the component collections. University Archives was never used by itself, but always in combination with at least one of the other collections. See Table 3 below for a complete breakdown of respondent use and non-use of the Manuscripts Department's collections.

Table 3: **Overall Respondent Use and Non-Use of the Manuscripts Department's Collections**

Collection User	Manuscript Department Collections									
	SHC	% of R	SFC	% of R	UA	% of R	GLM	% of R	MD	% of R
No	17	58.6%	24	82.8%	27	93.1%	24	82.8%	13	44.8%
Yes	12	41.4%	5	17.2%	2	6.9%	5	17.2%	16	55.2%
Totals	29	100.0%	29	100.0%	29	100.0%	29	100%	29	100.0%

R=Valid Respondents

SHC=Southern Historical Collection **SFC**=Southern Folklife Collection

UA=University Archives **GLM**=General and Literary Manuscripts

MD=Includes Use of Any of the Above Collections from the Manuscripts Department

Analyzing the collection-using-respondents through the prism of their status at the University, namely whether a respondent is a graduate student, non-tenured faculty/research staff, or tenured faculty, has revealed that 62.5% of the users of the Manuscripts Department's collections are tenured faculty members, 25% are graduate students, and 12.5% are non-tenured faculty or research staff. When university status is cross tabulated with the use of the various component collections, this same relative user pattern holds generally true with tenured faculty comprising the single largest group of any given collection's users, graduate students comprising the next largest group, and non-tenured faculty and professional research staff comprising the smallest group of users. In every instance, save one, tenured faculty account for a massive majority of users, ranging from 80% to 100% of a component collection's users. The sole exception to this tendency involves the SFC, which is used by equal numbers of tenured faculty and graduate students. As was mentioned earlier, this exception is most probably related to the Folklife graduate students' atypical relationship with this collection. See Table 4 below for a complete breakdown of collection users by academic status.

Table 4: Collection Users and Their Academic Status at UNC

User Status	Manuscript Department Collections									
	SHC	% of C	SFC	% of C	UA	% of C	GLM	% of C	MD	% of TU
G	1	8.3	2	40.0	--	--	1	20.0	4	25.0
NTF	1	8.3	1	20.0	--	--	--	--	2	12.5
TF	10	83.3	2	40.0	2	100.0	4	80.0	10	62.5
Totals	12	100.0	5	100.0	2	100.0	5	100.0	16	100.0

C=Collection Users TU=Total Users G=Graduate Student
 NTF=Non-Tenured Faculty TF=Tenured Faculty

If collection use within this group of respondents is skewed toward faculty members who comprise 75% of the Manuscripts Department's users, further examination suggests that the majority of this group is not just tenured, but really quite senior. In fact, one of the respondents wrote, "Retiring Soon" in the survey's margin.²³ The median year within which faculty users received their final degree is 1970 within a forty year range spanning the period from 1962 to 2002. Additionally, 72.7% of these users received their final degree in the 1960s or 1970s. As has been typical of the findings, the Southern Folklife Collection deviates from the norm and has a younger user population. See Table 5 for a break down of collection use by decade of receipt of final degree.

Table 5: Collection Users by Last Decade of Formal Education

	Manuscript Department Collections									
	SHC	% of C	SFC	% of C	UA	% of C	GLM	% of U	MD	% of TU
1960s	5	41.7	2	40.0	2	100.0	4	80.0	5	31.3
1970s	3	25.0	--	--	--	--	--	--	3	18.8
1980s	1	8.3	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	6.3
1990s	1	8.3	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	6.3
2000s	1	8.3	3	60.0	--	--	1	20.0	5	31.3
I	1	8.3	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	6.3
Totals	12	100.0	5	100.0	2	100.0	5	100.0	16	100.0

I=Indeterminate Decade

²³ The quotation is from R6, English Department.

A review of use by the primary departmental affiliation of the user suggests, rather unsurprisingly, that the most consistent and numerous departmental suppliers of users are the English and History departments, whose faculty and students account for 56.3% of all Manuscripts Department users; the next largest group, 12.5%, is affiliated with the Folklore Program. The remaining users, 31.2%, are drawn from the departments of African-American Studies, Anthropology, Geography, Music, and Political Science. With the exception of a single user from Anthropology, who used materials from both the Southern Historical Collection and General and Literary Manuscripts, this smaller subgroup of users has restricted their use of the Department's materials to a single collection, either the SHC or the SFC. The remaining three scholars whose use has a collection spanning quality are drawn from the senior faculty members of the English and History Departments.

In terms of component collection use, the SHC has the most departmentally diverse user population attracting scholars from six academic departments, the SFC is next with users drawn from four departments, General and Literary Manuscripts had users from three departments, and lastly, University Archives drew upon the Manuscript Department's core users, attracting the attention of a single user from English and History. See Table 6 below for a breakdown of collection use by academic department affiliation.

Table 6: Collection Users by Academic Department Affiliation

Respondent's Department	Manuscript Department Collections									
	SHC	% of C	SFC	% of C	UA	% of C	GLM	% of C	MD	% of TU
African-American Studies	1	8.3	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	6.3
Anthropology/ Archaeology	1	8.3	--	--	--	--	1	20.0	1	6.3
English/Creative Writing	4	33.3	1	20.0	1	50.0	3	60.0	5	31.3
Folklore	--	--	2	40.0	--	--	--	--	2	12.5
Geography	1	8.3	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	6.3
History	4	33.3	1	20.0	1	50.0	1	20.0	4	25.0
Music	--	--	1	20.0	--	--	--	--	1	6.3
Political Science	1	8.3	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	6.3
Totals	12	100.0	5	100.0	2	100.0	5	100.0	16	100.0

Turning to non-collection-using respondents, an analysis by their status at the University has revealed that 69.2% of the non-users of the Manuscripts Department's collections are graduate students and that the remaining 30.8% is evenly split between tenured faculty and non-tenure faculty or research staff. As with use, when academic status is cross tabulated with component collection non-use, non-use tends to adhere to this pattern, with graduate students comprising the largest group of any given component collection's non-users ranging from 70.6% for the SHC to 45.8% for the SFC. Non-tenured faculty and research staff provide between 12.5% and 17.6% of any given collection's non-users and tenured faculty account for between 11.8% and 41.7% of a collection's non-users. See Table 7 below for a complete breakdown of collection non-use by academic status.

Table 7: **Collection Non-Users by Academic Status**

Non-User Status	Manuscript Department Collections									
	SHC	% of CN	SFC	% of CN	UA	% of CN	GLM	% of CN	MD	% of TN
G	12	70.6	11	45.8	13	48.1	12	50.0	9	69.2
NTF	3	17.6	3	12.5	4	14.8	4	16.7	2	15.4
TF	2	11.8	10	41.7	10	37.1	8	33.3	2	15.4
<u>Totals</u>	17	100.0	24	100.0	27	100.0	24	100.0	13	100.0

G=Graduate Student **NTF**=Non-Tenured Faculty **TF**=Tenured Faculty

When non-use is viewed in association with departmental affiliation, the English, History, and Anthropology departments, combine to provide a significant majority, 77.0%, of the total non-user population. On the whole, the Anthropology Department's respondents form an anomalous group with respect to its relatively large position in the total respondent pool, 15.5%, and its high non-user rate, 75%. Setting this group aside, the English and History Departments, which provide 56.3% of the collections' users, also provide 53.9% of the collections' non-users. Focusing more closely on the respondents from these departments, it is revealed that 44.4% of the English Departments respondents did not use the collections. Similarly, 42.9% of the History Department's respondents were non-users. See Table 8 below for a fuller description of collection non-users by academic department affiliation.

Table 8: **Collection Non-Users by Academic Department Affiliation**

Respondent's Department	Manuscript Department Collections									
	SHC	% of CN	SFC	% of CN	UA	% of CN	GLM	% of CN	MD	% of TN
African-American Studies	--	--	1	4.2	1	3.7	1	4.2	--	--
Anthropology/ Archaeology	3	17.6	4	16.7	4	14.8	3	12.5	3	23.1
English/ Creative Writing	5	29.4	8	33.3	8	29.6	6	25.0	4	30.8
Folklore	3	17.6	1	4.2	3	11.1	3	12.5	1	7.7
Geography	1	5.9	2	8.3	2	7.4	2	8.3	1	7.7
History	3	17.6	6	25.0	6	22.2	6	25.0	3	23.1
Journalism	1	5.9	1	4.2	1	3.7	1	4.2	1	7.7
Music	1	5.9	--	--	1	3.7	1	4.2	--	--
Political Science	--	--	1	4.2	1	3.7	1	4.2	--	--
<u>Totals</u>	17	100.0	24	100.0	27	100.0	24	100.0	13	100.0

CN= Collection Non-Users TN=Total Non-Users

Familiarity and Use or Non-Use

As with the operational definition of use, familiarity is minimally defined here to be synonymous with whether or not a respondent is aware of a collection's existence. In this instance, there was no attempt to attain a nuanced understanding of the depth of a scholar's familiarity with the collections holdings; rather, the purpose was simply to gain a sense of the collections' public profile among its likely user population. The reason for this seems obvious, for the most basic structural impediment to any collection's use is its lack of a public presence.

A separate examination of respondent familiarity with the various component collections that comprise the Manuscripts Department's holdings, in descending order shows that, 89.7% of the responding scholars were familiar with the Southern Historical Collection, 37.9% were familiar with the Southern Folklife Collection and University Archives, and 31.0% were aware of General and Literary Manuscripts. Because of the number of singular responses from four of the responding departments, cross tabulating

familiarity with department affiliation produces some polarized results. However, when familiarity is viewed through the academic departments of the Manuscripts Department's core users, those respondents from History and English, it is revealed that while the SHC's public presence is quite high, 100.0% and 77.8% respectively, there is a precipitous drop off in the levels of familiarity with the other collections. Among respondents from the English department, 33.3% were familiar with the SFC, 44.4% were familiar with University Archives, and 55.6% were familiar with General and Literary Manuscripts. Similarly, for historians, 28.6% were aware of the SFC and University Archives and only 14.3 % were familiar with General and Literary Manuscripts. See table 9 below for a complete breakdown of collection familiarity by departmental affiliation.

Table 9: **Familiarity with Manuscript Department Collections by Academic Department Affiliation**

Respondent's Department	Familiar with Manuscripts Department's Collection							
	SHC	% of DR	SFC	% of DR	UA	% of DR	GLM	% of DR
African-American Studies	1	100.0	--	--	--	--	--	--
Anthropology/ Archaeology	3	75.0	1	25.0	--	--	2	50.0
English/ Creative Writing	7	77.8	3	33.3	4	44.4	5	55.6
Folklore	3	100.0	3	100.0	1	33.3	--	--
Geography	2	100.0	1	50.0	2	100.0	1	50.0
History	7	100.0	2	28.6	2	28.6	1	14.3
Journalism	1	100.0	--	--	1	100.0	--	--
Music	1	100.0	1	100.0	--	--	--	--
Political Science	1	100.0	--	--	1	100.0	--	--
Total Respondents	26	89.7	11	37.9	11	37.9	9	31.0

DR=Departmental Respondents

When familiarity with the collections is cross tabulated with a respondent's status at the university a pattern similar to the one discussed above emerges. The SHC is well known among all status groups with 100.0% of all faculty and 76.9% of all graduate

students aware of its existence. This unanimity fades with regard to all of the other Manuscripts Department collections, which are familiar to less than 50.0% of the population of each separate status group. See Table 10 below for a complete breakdown of familiarity by academic status.

Table 10: **Familiarity with Manuscripts Department Collections by Academic Status**

Respondent's Status	Familiar with Manuscripts Department's Collection							
	SHC	% of SG	SFC	% of SG	UA	% of SG	GLM	% of SG
G	10	76.9	5	38.5	3	23.1	4	30.8
NTF	4	100.0	2	50.0	2	50.0	1	25.0
TF	12	100.0	4	33.3	6	50.0	4	33.3
Total Respondents	26	89.7	11	37.9	11	37.9	9	31.0

G=Graduate Student
TF=Tenured Faculty

NTF=Non-Tenured Faculty
SG=Respondent's Status Group

When familiarity is viewed in conjunction with collection use an apparently muddled statistical portrait emerges. In all instances, save for General and Literary Manuscripts, the number of users is smaller than the number of non-users. However, with the exception of the large gap between the percentages of users and non-users, 63.6%, among those familiar with University Archives, the percentage differences between non-users and users are quite small making it somewhat difficult to see any strong tendencies.

Table 11: **Familiarity with the Collections by Collection Use**

Collection Use?	Respondents Familiar with the Collections			
	SHC	SFC	UA	GLM
No	53.8	54.5	81.8	44.4
Yes	46.2	45.5	18.2	55.5
% of TR	89.7	37.9	37.9	31.0

TR=Total Respondents

To clear up this confusing portrait, collection use and collection familiarity were examined for statistical correlation. While the sampling size and method make it unwise to generalize from the findings, a correlation, if found, may be helpful in describing this population and may be suggestive of a relationship.

Keeping this warning in mind, it is suggestive to note that SPSS does calculate a positive correlation of .584 and .680 between collection familiarity and collection use of the Southern Folklife Collection and General Literary Manuscripts. The finding of correlations at the 0.01 level for these two collections stands in contrast to the negative findings with regard to the SHC and University Archives. Speculating as to the underlying realities that these statistical findings reflect, it seems possible, given the high name recognition of the Southern Historical Collection and perceptions of the relatively circumscribed scholarly usefulness of any university archives, that both of these collections may have reached a sort of saturation point with regard to increasing their numbers of users by raising simple collection awareness. However, this is not to suggest that a more explicit public relations campaign designed to introduce the collections in depth might not have a more desired effect.

The Materiality of Use and Non-Use

Respondents were asked to describe the material mix of primary sources that they had used in their most recent research project. The choices that they made have been grouped beneath four generalized rubrics: published primary source materials, which include materials such as memoirs, periodicals, and various ephemera; personal and family papers, which include materials such as letters, diaries, and writings; corporate or organizational records, which include materials such as correspondence, minutes, and

financial records; and lastly, researcher generated materials, which encompasses a broad range of materials such as survey data, field notes, oral histories, and the like. A complete breakdown of the sub-categories is available in Appendix B, which contains a copy of the survey instrument.

An examination of the entire respondent pool's material use reveals that 100% of the respondents used published primary source materials, 68.9% used unpublished primary source archival/manuscript materials, and 37.9% gathered their own primary source materials. A closer examination of this group's archival/manuscript use reveals that of the 68.9% of all respondents that used these materials, 100% used personal or family papers, where as only 24.1% used corporate or organizational records.

Viewing the material mix in light of a researcher's use or non-use of the Manuscript Department's collections reveals a number of significant differences and an interesting commonality. To state the obvious, while 100% of the Manuscript Department's users used archival/manuscript materials, only 30.8% of the collection's non-users used this type of materials. An examination of the composition of archival/manuscript use within the collection non-user group reveals that 100% used personal and family papers and 50% used corporate or organizational papers. A similar examination of the collection user group shows that 100% used personal and family papers, but that corporate or organizational records were used by 31.3%, a significantly lower rate of use when compared to the non-user group. It is significant to note that in both instances, personal and family papers stood as a sort of material gate keeper, for not a single respondent used corporate or organizational papers in isolation from personal or

family papers. Additionally, nearly identical percentages of scholars were involved with collection or creation of primary source materials.

Table 12: Use of Primary Source Material Types by Collection Use and Non-Use

Collection Use?	Did Respondent Use Material Type?			
	Published	Personal/Family	Corporate/Organizational	Self-Generated
No	100.0%	30.8%	15.4%	38.5%
Yes	100.0%	100.0%	31.3%	37.5%
% of Respondents	100.0%	68.9%	24.1%	37.9%

An examination of the material types that the Manuscript Department contributed to the primary source material mix shows that 80% of the collections' users used published materials, 86.7% used personal and family papers, and 26.7% used corporate or organizational records. These levels of use are consistently lower than the levels that were reported when scholars were asked to describe the overall composition of the primary sources employed in their latest project. In addition to reporting error, there are two likely reasons for this pattern. First, although this study made no attempt to situate the Manuscripts Department within a broader constellation of repositories, it seems reasonable to imagine that a number of scholars made use of archival/manuscript materials from other institutional sources. Second, one of the archival using scholars, who did not happen to use any Manuscripts Department materials in his research, explained this discrepancy by pointing out that he or she was working on a micro-history of two depression-era rural families and that the documentary materials used in this study

were self-collected. Again, it is reasonable to expect that other scholars may be behaving similarly and are also acting as collecting repositories.²⁴

Table 13: Use of Manuscript Department Collections by Material Type

Use Material Type?	Published	Personal/Family	Corporate/Organizational
No	20.0%	13.3%	73.3%
Yes	80.0%	86.7%	26.7%
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The Consistencies of Use and Non-Use

To better contextualize a scholar's use or non-use of the Manuscripts Department's collections, the survey recipients were asked to characterize the typicality of their most recent research practices in terms of their own personal past practices as well as the broader practices of their academic peers. In terms of their own past practices, 73.1% of all respondents viewed their use or non-use of the Manuscript Department's collections as being typical of their research routines. Similarly, 72.4% of respondents considered their use or non-use of these collections to be representative of the practices of their peers. In short, a significant majority of the scholars saw their actions, of omission or commission, with regard to the Manuscripts Department as rather unexceptional, indeed even mainstream scholarly behavior.

When these judgments are cross tabulated with Manuscripts Department use and non-use it is revealed that 81.3% of the collections' users viewed their most recent use of the Department's collections as being representative of their normal practice as well as

²⁴ This observation is reinforced by SHC manuscript collections like the Lawrence D. Kessler Collection. Professor Kessler is a professor emeritus of Chinese history and his donated papers include two separate and extensive collections of primary source manuscript materials that he gathered to support his own East-Asian scholarship.

that of their peers. This finding is seconded by the fact that 89.5% of the scholars who used manuscript or archival materials as a part of their mix of primary sources viewed this combination of research materials as being typical of the sources consulted by their academic peer group. A more ambivalent pattern emerges with regard to non-users, who are less likely to view their non-use of the collections as typical of either their past practices (61.5%) or those of their peers (60.0%). Given the relatively small size of this sample, these lower rates appear to have been the direct statistical result of those instances when scholars from the English or History Department's have departed from their personal past practices and from those of their peers and not used Manuscripts Department materials. This observation is reinforced by one respondent's declaration that while the Manuscript Department's had not been used in his or her current dissertation research, "they were invaluable" for their thesis.²⁵

The Significance of Use

Thus far this discussion of the use of the Manuscript Department's collections has focused on the mechanics of archival and manuscript use. Of course, this mere physical act could vary widely from intensive paleographic-like scrutiny of documents to simple browsing, although the latter seems less likely given the obvious structural impediments to the casual use of special collections. Moreover, this simple definition does not assess the intellectual use that was made of these materials. To gauge the significance that the manuscript materials played within a scholar's project, respondents were asked a pair of questions.²⁶ First, the respondents were asked to assess the overall importance of the

²⁵ R8, English Department.

²⁶ Survey question numbers 11 and 12. See Appendix B.

manuscript materials to their project by selecting one of four rankings: Very Important, Important, Somewhat Important, and Not Important. Second, because even an important intellectual role could legitimately remain unacknowledged in an academic's work, the respondents were asked if the manuscript materials that they used had been cited in their most recent project.

An analysis of the responses to these two questions indicates that the scholars who used Manuscripts Department materials viewed them as having played an important part in their research. When asked to ascribe a specific rank to the role that the materials had played, 85.7% were willing to characterize the materials as having played either a "Very Important" or "Important" role, whereas only 14.2% judged the materials to have been "Somewhat Important." No one declared the materials to have been "Not Important." Additionally, if citation is a formalized marker of intellectual or scholarly indebtedness, all of the scholars, except one, felt the obligation to report their use of these materials; the lone exception was one of the two scholars who had described the materials as being only "Somewhat Important" to their research project.

Table 14: **Ranked Importance of Significance by Citation or Non-Citation of Manuscript Materials**

Cited Materials	How Important a Role Did Manuscript Department Materials Play in Your Most Recent Project?							
	Somewhat Important	% of C	Important	% of C	Very Important	% of C	C	% of C
No	1	7.1	--	--	--		1	7.1
Yes	1	7.1	4	28.6	8	57.1	13	92.9
Totals	2	14.2	4	28.6	8	57.1	14	100

C=Collection Users

The Nature of Work: Genre, Time Period, and Subject Matter

In an attempt to partially fulfill David Levy's mandate that information professionals strive to better understand the nature of the scholarly research that is being done with their collections, the survey asked respondents to provide some descriptive information about the nature of their projects. Specifically, scholars were asked to characterize the reasons or motivations that compelled them to carry out their projects as well as the topical nature of their research. In Levy's formulation this descriptive information delves into the sort of "work" that is being done with the materials. Levy has persuasively argued that a firm understanding of the anticipated users and uses of any information object is the essential preliminary step for the task of identifying other materials of enduring value. However, while these arguments are intellectually convincing and even quite powerful, given the real-world budgetary and staffing constraints that are placed on information professionals, the remedy he has prescribed, a program of extensive and intensive field research into the life of the document is not realistically going to become a routine part of the practicing archivist's professional life. Indeed, while it is true that the very limited information collected by this survey provides but a shadow of the richness that Levy's tactics promise, they are probably good enough. In fact, one major criticism of Levy might well be the simple question: How much do librarians and archivists really need to know about a user to serve his or her needs well? Surely, the answer does not require the exquisite pen portraits that Levy and other have drawn.

Recipients were asked to classify the nature of their work by the function or functions that it played in their scholarly lives. The choices that they were presented with

were: “Research for Academic Coursework,” “Academic Research for Publication,” “Research for Thesis or Dissertation,” “Academic Research for Presentation,” and lastly there was space to describe any impetus that lay outside of these pre-selected categories. Because a single work can play multiple functions, the scholars were encouraged to choose all the labels that they considered to be relevant. Taken as a whole, 75.9% of the research projects described by the respondents were to be published or formally presented to the scholarly community, 34.5% were in support of theses or dissertations, 27.6% were part of academic coursework, and 17.2% were related to formal instructional activities.

Table 15: **Research Project Genre by Collection Use and Non-Use**

Collection Use?	Research Project Genre			
	Thesis/Dissertation	Coursework	Publication	Instruction
No	80.0	37.5	31.8	--
Yes	20.0	62.5	68.2	100.0
% of Total Respondents	34.5	27.6	75.9	17.2

When these formal or genre-like descriptions of the respondents’ research projects are separated according to their use or non-use of the Manuscripts Department’s collections, it is discovered that the Manuscripts Department’s materials supported 68.2% of all the work that was designated as being destined for publication or formal presentation, 62.5% of the work that was carried out in support of academic coursework, 20.0% of the work being done in support of theses or dissertations, and 100.0% of the work relating to on-campus instruction. The relative proportions of the types of work being done by the collection’s users, especially the relatively low percentage dedicated to the support of theses or dissertations and a relatively high percentage in support of formal publications and presentations, echo our earlier discussion of the demographic make-up

of the Manuscripts Department's users. In short, the types of work described as being supported by the collections are more typical of faculty than graduate students.

Meaningfully describing the subject matter of the respondents' work in aggregate terms is a problematic proposition for two essential reasons. First, to allow the responding scholars the latitude necessary to describe what are by nature idiosyncratic projects, no effort was made to circumscribe their choices by devising a limited number of pre-coded labels to define topical content. Reading the various research topics detailed in the surveys reinforced the notion that describing studies like those on religion, lynching, and the death penalty, antebellum wedding rituals, tobacco cultivation and landscape change, or the role of the sailor in antebellum literature with a series of check boxes would have been crude and reductive. Second, given the fairly low number of respondents and the disparate nature of the subject matter that they are researching, the various coding schemas that have been attempted have either proved too limited in their description or so nuanced that they defied consolidation. The solution for this has been two-fold. First, it was fairly easy to extract the temporal content of the research projects that the scholars have been describing so that an overall sense of the time periods being researched could be assembled. Second, the responding scholars have been allowed to speak for themselves about their research interests. The full listing of the research topics as described by the respondents is in Tables 14 and 15 below which separately present the research topics that were supported by the Manuscripts Department's Collections and those that were not along with their stated reasons for non-use.

The temporal boundaries of the topics that these respondents are studying range from pre-Columbian times to the near present. In statistical terms, 7.1% of the

respondents are working on topics predating the 19th century; 17.9% are working in the antebellum period, 1800 to 1860; 14.3% are working in the latter half of the 19th century; 1860 to 1900; 10.7% are working in the period from 1900 to 1945; and 32.1% are working on the post war period to the present. Additionally, 17.9% are working on topics that span multiple time periods.

Table 16: **Research Project Time Period by Collection Use and Non-Use**

Collection Use?	Research Project's Time Period					
	Pre-1800	1800-1860	1860-1900	1900-1945	1945-Present	Longitudinal
No	100.0	60.0	50.0	33.3	44.4	20.0
Yes	--	40.0	50.0	66.6	55.6	80.0
% of TR	7.1	17.9	14.3	10.7	32.1	17.9

TR=Total Respondents

When temporal content is viewed in conjunction with use and non-use a very similar pattern emerges. Indeed, as with the entire respondent pool, both sub-groups have a mean value in the 1900-1945 period and their modal value is the period 1945 to the present. However, the user and non-user groups diverge in two key respects: first, scholars working on the very earliest topics did not use the Manuscripts Department's collections and second, 75% of the scholars working on research that had a longitudinal nature, spanning 100 years or more, were users of the collections. Again, this last finding is suggestive of the work of senior scholars who feel professionally and intellectually secure enough to attempt very large and ambitious works of scholarship.

Table 17: Research Topics Not Supported by Collection Use with Respondent's Reasons for Non-Use

Non-User Research Topic and Interests	Reason Given for Non-Use
Proslavery Ideology and Practice in Antebellum Virginia	"Thus far in my research I have tried to get at the behavior and ideas of non-elite groups. Therefore, the private correspondence of planters and politicians has not been my priority. Never-the-less, I intend to use the SHC in the near future."
Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in the U.S., France, and West Africa	"I am not aware of the nature of these collections. In fact, I wasn't aware of their existence until participating in this survey. Since I am a 1 st year student [Anthropology], I have not learned about all of UNC's resources yet."
Native Americans of North Carolina	"Have not found anything yet that would be directly useful to my work at these facilities."
Changes Related to Flu-Cured Tobacco in Eastern North Carolina	"I hope to use materials from these collections, but my topic requires interviews."
The Global South	"Time constraints and I use fieldwork."
Contemporary North Carolina Politics	No Response
Pedagogical Guidebook for New College Teachers	"The sources were not pertinent."
Pre-Historic Resource Procurement in the Southeastern United States	"I have not needed to thus far, although I may need to at some point. Also, while I know these collections exist, I haven't got a very good idea about how to go about using them."
Gender and Mother-Daughter Relationships in Contemporary Fiction	"Not relevant to topic—Literature is from the past 25 years and they don't usually collect Mss of short stories, anyway."
Transcendentalism and Sentimentalism in Antebellum American Literature	"Most of the material I need is available elsewhere. Perhaps these collections have materials that could be useful, but I have not looked at any indexes."
Antebellum Maritime literature	"Not as relevant and only just beginning to complete the research-used SHC collections for my thesis and they were invaluable."
Southern and British Literature	"I've been working on creative projects, other academic articles and an encyclopedia entry on the southern writer Ruth Bragg. None of these required the use of the SHC."
Women's Philanthropy in the Trans-Mississippi West	"I don't work on the South."
Race Relations Between the Family of Landowners and a Family of Tenant Farmers in South Carolina	"I am collecting my own primary research for my master's thesis—it's a very specific project with two specific families."

Table 18: **Research Topics Supported by Collection Use**

User Research Topic and Interests
North Carolina Popular Country Music
Religion, Lynching, and the Death Penalty in the U.S.
Weddings of the Elite Class in the Antebellum Carolinas
Catalogue of Southern Literary Manuscripts
American Creationist Movement
Federal Writers Project
Student Projects on Slavery in the Antebellum South
County Music Oral Histories
White and Black Historical Memory in the U.S. South, 1865-Present
History of the Pronunciation of Pen/Pin in the South
Landscape Changes Related to Tobacco Cultivation
Biography of a 19th Century North Carolina Politician
Southern Secession
History of Chapel Hill

Stated Reasons for Non-Use

Respondents that did not use the Manuscripts Department's collections in their most recent research were asked to describe the reasons why they had not used these primary source materials. Unsurprisingly, the majority of respondents, 53.8%, stated that the collections' materials were not relevant to their specific topic; additionally, 42.9% of this group went on to describe the collection's irrelevance to their work as relating to the form or nature of the primary source materials held by the Manuscripts Department. In at least three instances, scholars avoided the collections because their research and academic field did not value the sort of documentary material common to archival and manuscript repositories. Only one scholar, representing 7.7% of the respondent pool, ascribed their non-use to an absolute unawareness of the Manuscript Department and its collections.

Three other interesting and important themes emerge from the coding and analysis of the reasons for non-use. First, 15.4% of the responses indicate a degree of confusion, either explicitly admitted, "while I know these collections exist, I haven't got

a very good idea about how to go about using them” or inferred, “I have not looked at any indexes” about the process of accessing and using the Manuscript Department’s collections.²⁷ Second, 15.4% of the non-user respondents described the collection in almost stereotypical terms. One scholar, writing on non-elite views of slavery characterized the Manuscripts Department’s holdings as consisting of “the private correspondence of planters and politicians” and another researcher working on contemporary American short stories asserted that “they don’t usually collect Mss of short stories, anyway.”²⁸ Third, 30.8% of the non-users expressed an interest in using the Manuscripts Department’s collections in the future. Given the earlier discussion of the wide public profile held by the SHC, these comments suggest that more public knowledge about the material and subject content of the collections as well as more information about the mechanics of using manuscript and archival materials might eliminate some of the intellectual impediments to use.

²⁷ The quotations are from R15, Anthropology Department, and R9, English Department.

²⁸ The quotations are from R28, History Department, and R16, English Department.

V. Conclusions

Archivists have not done a very good job of reaching out to assess the information needs of the broader communities that they have it as their mission to serve. There are, no doubt, many reasons for this circumstance, but a review of the literature concerning digital libraries does suggest that the primary reason for this situation lies in the tangled institutional contexts within which practicing librarians and archivists function. The needs and concerns of the institution have a very real way of dominating the thoughts of information professionals and driving their actions. Within this crowded work place, David Levy's criticism that libraries have consistently misunderstood their users must resonate with many, but his corrective strategy of conducting detailed ethnographic explorations of a user's research work must also seem a distant fantasy.

The larger goal of this project is to convert Levy's critique into a manageable process that could be made workable within a typical institutional environment. Our test case was a survey-based examination of the information needs and predilections of scholars of the American South associated with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Currently, the information needs and preferences of this diverse group of scholars, which comprises an important constituency of the Manuscripts Department, are unmonitored; and often, what is known is based on anecdotal evidence. A goal for this study is to alter this situation by presenting the curatorial staff with a comprehensive descriptive analysis of this group's patterns of manuscript use and non-use as well as a methodology for periodically updating this data.

When we turn to the specific findings, we are repeatedly confronted with data suggesting that the majority of the Manuscripts Department's users are significantly older

than the collections' non-users. This was most explicitly presented in the demographic discussion of use, but echoes of it were found throughout the findings in our discussions of the types of work being supported and even the temporal content of the research. After all, who but a person with tenure would eschew the relative certainties of a micro-study for a century spanning *magnum opus*?

But if these findings present the disturbing portrait of a collection with a naturally declining user base, the study also presents some more hopeful signs. Nearly a third of the Manuscripts Department's users were affiliated with departments other than English and History; a fact that suggests that there is the potential to attract users from non-traditional department sources. Finally, a review of the stated reasons for non-use, which it should be recalled are chiefly the statements of younger scholars, suggests that some younger scholars have a willingness to use the collections as well as some degree of confusion about the nature of the collections' content, form, and means of access. The name of the Southern Historical Collection is well known, but its contents remain obscured by assumptions and technical ignorance. Clearly, this seems to present an opportunity to reacquaint these scholars with the Manuscripts Department's collections.

Appendix A: Survey Cover Letter

April 27, 2004

Dear Scholar:

By way of a brief introduction, my name is Matthew Turi. I am a graduate student in the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as well as a graduate assistant with the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library.

I am conducting research in support of a master's paper, "Patterns of Scholarly Use and Non-Use of the Southern Historical Collection by Members of UNC's Academic Community." This study is an attempt to better understand the factors that underlie academic use or non-use of the Southern Historical Collection (SHC) by UNC's scholars of the American South. Specifically, my research seeks to understand how a scholar's academic discipline, methodological choices, and research interests relate to their use or non-use of the materials held in the Southern Historical Collection. A richer understanding of the actual research needs and preferences of working scholars will aide SHC curators as they seek to acquire meaningful collections of manuscript materials.

The enclosed survey asks questions about your use of the SHC and other campus library resources, your scholarly discipline, career status, research interests, and research material predilections. It is designed to be completed in 10-15 minutes. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may choose not to answer any particular question or questions. Any information that you do elect to provide will be kept anonymous. Your completion and return of the enclosed survey will serve as your consent to participate in this study.

This study has been approved by the Academic Affairs Institutional Review Board (AA-IRB) of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Should you have any concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the AA-IRB at (919) 962-7761 or at aa-irb@unc.edu.

If you have any concerns, questions, or comments about this survey and the research study it supports, please feel free to contact me (by telephone (919) 416-1698 or email turi@email.unc.edu) or my academic advisor, Professor Deborah Barreau at (919) 966-5042 or barreau@ils.unc.edu.

I sincerely hope that you will choose to participate in this study by completing this survey and returning it in the accompanying envelope by March 10, 2004. Thank you for your consideration.

Matthew Turi, Graduate Student
School of Information and Library Science
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
turi@email.unc.edu or (919) 416-1698

Appendix B: Survey Instrument

I. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. What is your current **employment status** at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill? *Please check all options and complete all blanks that are relevant.*

a. Faculty Status:

- | | | |
|--|--|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching Assistant | <input type="checkbox"/> Research Assistant | <input type="checkbox"/> Lecturer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant Professor | <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Professor | <input type="checkbox"/> Professor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professor Emeritus | <input type="checkbox"/> Other(s): _____ | |

b. Tenure Status:

- ☐ Tenured
- ☐ Non-Tenured
- ☐ Non-Tenure Track Faculty
- ☐ Tenure Track Faculty
- Number of Years until Tenure Review? _____

c. Department or Program Affiliation(s):

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> African-American Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> American Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian Studies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anthropology | <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology | <input type="checkbox"/> Creative Writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economics | <input type="checkbox"/> English | <input type="checkbox"/> Folklore |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geography | <input type="checkbox"/> History | <input type="checkbox"/> Journalism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Political Science | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Religious Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> Sociology | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other(s): _____ | | |

If you are affiliated with more than one department or program and consider one department or program to be your primary institutional affiliation, please circle it above in section 1(c).

2. What is your **current** level of **educational achievement**? *Please check all options and complete all blanks that are relevant.*

a. Degrees Completed:

- ☐ Bachelor's Degree: Date Completed _____
Major(s): _____
- ☐ Master's Degree: Date Completed _____
Discipline: _____
Major Field(s): _____
- ☐ Doctoral Degree: Date Completed _____
Discipline: _____
Major Field(s): _____
- ☐ Other Degree:
Degree Name: _____
Discipline: _____
Date Completed: _____
Major Field(s): _____

☐ Other Degree:

Degree Name: _____

Discipline: _____

Date Completed: _____

Major Field(s): _____

b. Graduate Degree(s) Currently in Progress:

☐ Master's Degree

☐ 1st Year ☐ 2nd Year ☐ Other _____

Discipline: _____

Awarding Department(s): _____

Major Field(s): _____

☐ Additional Master's Degree

☐ 1st Year ☐ 2nd Year ☐ Other _____

Discipline: _____

Awarding Department(s): _____

Major Field(s): _____

☐ Doctoral Degree

☐ Doing Coursework ☐ ABD: Year Passed Exams: _____

Discipline: _____

Awarding Department(s): _____

Major Field(s): _____

☐ Other Additional Graduate Degree:

Degree Name: _____

Progress in the Program: _____

Discipline: _____

Awarding Department(s): _____

Major Field(s): _____

II. ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH INTERESTS

3. Briefly describe your major academic and intellectual

interest(s): _____

4. Describe your current or most recent research project(s): *Please check all options and complete all blanks that are relevant.*

a. Reason(s) for Research:

- ☐ Research as a Part of Academic Coursework ☐ Research for a Thesis or Dissertation
☐ Academic Research for Publication ☐ Academic Research for Presentation
☐ Other Reason(s): _____

b. Brief Topical Description:

c. Was your most recent research project completed over two years ago? ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. What types of **primary sources** have you used while working on your most recent research project? *Please check all options and complete all blanks that are relevant.*

a. Published Primary Source Materials:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Memoirs | <input type="checkbox"/> Document Sets | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Histories | <input type="checkbox"/> Periodicals | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspapers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reports | <input type="checkbox"/> Advertisements | <input type="checkbox"/> Government Documents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pamphlets | <input type="checkbox"/> Posters | <input type="checkbox"/> Laws and Regulations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maps | <input type="checkbox"/> Video Recordings | <input type="checkbox"/> Audio Recordings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Data Sets | <input type="checkbox"/> Musical Scores | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Source(s): _____ | | |
-

b. Unpublished Primary Source Materials:

- ☐ Personal or Family Materials:
- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diaries | <input type="checkbox"/> Journals | <input type="checkbox"/> Letters and Correspondence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Photographs | <input type="checkbox"/> Scrapbooks | <input type="checkbox"/> Original Writings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wills | <input type="checkbox"/> Deeds | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Legal Papers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contracts | <input type="checkbox"/> Ledgers | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Financial Papers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Artwork | <input type="checkbox"/> Oral Histories | <input type="checkbox"/> Blueprints and Technical Drawings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual Recordings | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Source(s): _____ | | |
-

- ☐ Corporate or Organizational Materials:
- | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence | <input type="checkbox"/> Minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Papers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Papers | <input type="checkbox"/> Reports | <input type="checkbox"/> Photographs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oral Histories | <input type="checkbox"/> Contracts | <input type="checkbox"/> Blueprints and Technical Drawings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual Recordings | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Source(s): _____ | | |
-

c. Other Primary Source Materials:

- ☐ Researcher Mediated Primary Source Material(s):
- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Survey Data | <input type="checkbox"/> Interviews | <input type="checkbox"/> Case Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> Field Research |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Source(s): _____ | | | |
-
-
-

6. Is the mix of primary source materials that you used in your most recent research project typical of the research materials used by other scholars in your academic discipline?

☐ Yes

☐ No: In what way do your primary source material choices differ from those of other scholars? _____

III. MATERIAL AND COLLECTION USE

7. Are you **familiar** with the following research collections? *Please check all options that are relevant.*

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carolina Population Center Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Documenting the American South |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General and Literary Manuscripts | <input type="checkbox"/> Manuscripts Department |
| <input type="checkbox"/> North Carolina Collection | <input type="checkbox"/> North Carolina Gallery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Odum Institute Data Archive | <input type="checkbox"/> Photographic Archives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rare Book Collection | <input type="checkbox"/> Southern Folklife Collection (SFC) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Southern Historical Collection (SHC) | <input type="checkbox"/> University Archives |

8. Have you **used** primary source materials from the following research collections in your most recent research project? *Please check all options that are relevant.*

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carolina Population Center Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Documenting the American South |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General and Literary Manuscripts | <input type="checkbox"/> Manuscripts Department |
| <input type="checkbox"/> North Carolina Collection | <input type="checkbox"/> North Carolina Gallery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Odum Institute Data Archive | <input type="checkbox"/> Photographic Archives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rare Book Collection | <input type="checkbox"/> Southern Folklife Collection (SFC) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Southern Historical Collection (SHC) | <input type="checkbox"/> University Archives |

*If you have **not used** primary source materials from the **Manuscripts Department**, the **Southern Historical Collection (SHC)**, the **Southern Folklife Collection (SFC)**, **General and Literary Manuscripts**, or **University Archives** in your most recent research project, please go to **Question 13 in Section IV, COLLECTION ASSESSMENT**, below.*

9. What types of **primary sources** from the **Manuscripts Department**, the **Southern Historical Collection (SHC)**, the **Southern Folklife Collection (SFC)**, **General and Literary Manuscripts**, or **University Archives** have you used while working on your most recent research project? *Please check all options and complete all blanks that are relevant.*

a. Published Primary Source Materials:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Memoirs | <input type="checkbox"/> Document Sets | <input type="checkbox"/> Musical Scores |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Histories | <input type="checkbox"/> Periodicals | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspapers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Advertisements | <input type="checkbox"/> Government Documents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pamphlets | <input type="checkbox"/> Posters | <input type="checkbox"/> Laws and Regulations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maps | <input type="checkbox"/> Video Recordings | <input type="checkbox"/> Audio Recordings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reports | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Source(s): _____ | | |

b. Unpublished Primary Source Materials:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal or Family Materials: | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diaries | <input type="checkbox"/> Journals | <input type="checkbox"/> Letters and Correspondence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Photographs | <input type="checkbox"/> Scrapbooks | <input type="checkbox"/> Original Writings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wills | <input type="checkbox"/> Deeds | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Legal Papers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contracts | <input type="checkbox"/> Ledgers | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Financial Papers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Artwork | <input type="checkbox"/> Oral Histories | <input type="checkbox"/> Blueprints and Technical Drawings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual Recordings | | |

☐ Other Source(s): _____

☐ Corporate or Organizational Materials:

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence | <input type="checkbox"/> Minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Papers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Papers | <input type="checkbox"/> Reports | <input type="checkbox"/> Photographs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oral Histories | <input type="checkbox"/> Contracts | <input type="checkbox"/> Blueprints and Technical Drawings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual Recordings | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Source(s): _____ | | |

10. Briefly describe the Collection(s) that contain the primary source materials that you selected in **Question 9**:

11. In aggregate, how important a role did the primary source materials that you selected in **Question 9** play in your most recent research project?

- ☐ Very Important ☐ Important ☐ Somewhat Important ☐ Not Important

12. Have you cited primary source materials from the **Manuscripts Department**, the **Southern Historical Collection (SHC)**, the **Southern Folklife Collection (SFC)**, **General and Literary Manuscripts**, or **University Archives** in your most recent research project?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Go to Question 14 in SECTION IV, below.

IV. COLLECTION ASSESSMENT

13. Briefly describe why you have not used primary source materials from the **Manuscripts Department**, the **Southern Historical Collection (SHC)**, the **Southern Folklife Collection (SFC)**, **General and Literary Manuscripts**, or **University Archives** in your most recent research project?

14. Is your use or non-use of the primary source materials of the **Manuscripts Department**, the **Southern Historical Collection (SHC)**, the **Southern Folklife Collection (SFC)**, **General and Literary Manuscripts**, or **University Archives** in your most recent research project typical of your past research practices?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

15. Is your use or non-use of the primary source materials of the **Manuscripts Department**, the **Southern Historical Collection (SHC)**, the **Southern Folklife Collection (SFC)**, **General and Literary Manuscripts**, or **University Archives** in your most recent research project typical of your past research practices?

Archives in your most recent research project typical of the practice of other scholars working in your academic discipline?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please return your survey to me through the campus mail using the enclosed envelope. My campus mailing address is:

Matthew Turi
Manuscripts Department
CB# 3926, Wilson Library
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514-8890

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